

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 IO-10 AGR-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15

STR-01 TAR-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

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P 202135Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7458

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON ETRD ES

SUBJ: WORLD COFFEE PRODUCERS MEETING, SAN SALVADOR, FEBRUARY 14-16

REF: SAN SALVADOR 0437

1. SUMMARY: TWENTY DELEGATIONS REPRESENTING SOME 38 COFFEE PRODUCING COUNTRIES ACCOUNTING FOR A CLAIMED 90 PERCENT OF WORLD COFFEE PRODUCTION MET IN SAN SALVADOR FEB 14-16 FOR THE FIRST MEETING OF WORLD COFFEE PRODUCERS HELD OUTSIDE LONDON. THE REPORTEDLY FRANK EXCHANGES AND DELIBERATIONS PRODUCED NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN PRODUCER POLICY. THE MEETING WILL PROBABLY GO DOWN IN COFFEE HISTORY AS A WASTED EFFORT -- AS ONE PARTICIPANT PUT IT -- EXPENSIVE TRAVEL TO CALL EACH OTHER THE SAME OLD NAMES. THE TWO AGREEMENTS REACHED WERE: 1) TO STRENGTHEN THE ALREADY AGREED TO RETENTION SCHEMES AND 2) COORDINATE MARKETING WITHIN EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPINGS OF COFFEE (COLOMBIAN MILDS, OTHER MILDS, UNWASHED ARABICAS, AND ROBUSTAS). THE CHIEF DIVISION WAS BETWEEN THE ROBUSTAS AND OTHER MILDS WHICH FAVORED TOTAL SALES SUSPENSION AS OPPOSED BY COLOMBIA AND A HEDGING BRAZIL. PUBLIC COMMENT WAS NOTABLY RESTRAINED OWING, NO DOUBT, TO CSC PRESIDENT TINOCO'S URGING THAT OFF-THE-CUFF STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. THE PRESS WAS RILED BY EXCLUSION FROM THE SESSION AND ITS MIFF, SUPPORTED BY APPARENTLY ACCURATE SOUNDINGS, RESULTED IN LOCAL HEADLINES PROCLAIMING THE MEETING A FIASCO. AFTER INTERNATIONAL COFFEE PRICE QUOTATIONS FELL, ONE PAPER, REFERRING TO THE SALVADORAN CLAIM OF A SUCCESSFUL MEETING, HEADLINED "COFFEE DROPS UNDER WEIGHT OF SUCCESSFUL MEETING". PORTUGAL'S ROCHA DE MEDIOA TRAVELED AFTER THE MEETING FOR A WELL-ATTENDED SEMINAR ON PORTUGAL'S BUFFER STOCK PROPOSAL. TINOCO, WHILE ADMITTING THAT THE MEETING CARVED NO NEW GROUND, SAID THE SESSION PRODUCED THE MOST FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND INFORMATION TO DATE. HE SAID IT PROVIDED AN INVALUABLE EDUCATION TO EL SALVADOR'S COFFEE INDUSTRY, OF WHICH SOME 60 SAT AS OBSERVERS. IT MAY ALSO HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PRODUCERS ARE NO NEARER

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TO AN EFFECTIVE CARTEL THAN BEFORE. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT MOLINA INAUGURATED THE MEETING OF WORLD COFFEE PRODUCERS IN SAN SALVADOR FEBRUARY 14 WITH 20 DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING (LIST FOLLOWS TO EB/TRP AND LONDON). SINCE TWO OF THE DELEGATIONS WERE OMACAF AND IACO, TOTAL COUNTRIES REPRESENTED NUMBERED 36-38. NATIONAL DELEGATIONS WERE: BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, NICARAGUA,

MEXICO, PERU, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, TRINIDAD/TOBAGO, VENEZUELA, (FOR FINANCIAL, NOT COFFEE REASONS), CAMEROON, IVORY COAST, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, TOGO, UGANDA, PORTUGAL. ABSENT WERE HAITI, PANAMA AND ECUADOR. THE AFRICANS WERE DESCRIBED AS HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL, WELL PREPARED. SESSIONS GOT OFF TO A TECHNICAL BAD START WHEN THE COMBINATION OF THE SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION EQUIPMENT AND THE PRESIDENT'S RADIO-TRANSMITTED ADDRESS OVERTAXED THE ELECTRICAL CAPACITY AND THE FRIDAY SESSION SUSPENDED FOR SOME 5 HOURS. THE DAILY SESSION, WITH BRIEF BREAKS FOR LUNCH AND A RECEPTION BY THE PRESIDENT, WENT FROM 10:30 AM TO 6 AM SUNDAY. THE "RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE" FINISHED ITS WORK IN THE AFTERNOON. CONSIDERABLE TIME WAS GIVEN TO GROUP CAUCUSING. THE DELEGATES VISITED THE COUNTRYSIDE AND WERE SHOWN THE COFFEE STOCKS. PORTUGAL'S ARTUR ROCHA DE MEDINA STAYED ON TO LEAD A SEMINAR ON THE PORTUGUESE BUFFER-STOCK PROPOSAL WHICH ATTRACTED A LARGE NUMBER FROM THE COFFEE INDUSTRY AND REPORTEDLY EARNED A GOOD RECEPTION.

3. THE FOLLOWING IS OUR LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE DELIVERED TO THE PRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD COFFEE PRODUCERS GROUP, LIC. FAUSTO CANTU PENA, OF MEXICO: BEING QUOTE: THE WORLD GROUP OF COFFEE PRODUCERS, MEETING IN THE CITY OF SAN SALVADOR THE 14, 15 AND 16 OF FEBRUARY, AGREED TO ESTABLISH IMMEDIATE PRICE OBJECTIVES.

TO ARRIVE AT THESE OBJECTIVES, THE COUNTRIES WITHIN EACH COFFEE GROUP (COLOMBIAN MILDS, OTHER MILDS, UNWASHED ARABICAS AND ROBUSTAS) WILL COORDINATE AMONG THEMSELVES THEIR MARKETING POLICIES.

WITH RELATION TO THE RETENTION SYSTEM, THE GROUP AGREED TO STRENGTHEN IT SO THAT RETAINED COFFEE CANNOT RETURN TO THE MARKET UNTIL PRICE OBJECTIVES HAVE BEEN REACHED.
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THE GROUP WILL MEET WITH THE NECESSARY FREQUENCY TO TAKE MEASURES JUDGED PERTINENT. IT IS PLANNED THAT THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE IN LONDON EARLY MARCH, AFTER THE SESSIONS AT THE OIM, RELATIVE TO THE NEGOTIATION OF A NEW COFFEE AGREEMENT. END QUOTE.

4. CSC
PRESENT JUAN ANTONIO TINOCO CONFIRMED TO ECONOFF REPORTS CONCERNING THE IRRECONCILABLE POSITIONS TAKEN PRIOR AND DURING THE MEETING. ANOTHER PARTICIPANT DETAILED THE ALIGNMENTS. THE ROBUSTAS BROUGHT TO THE MEETING A POSITION URGING TOTAL SUSPENSION OF SALES. COLOMBIA OPPOSED THE IDEA AND BRAZIL HEDGED, SAYING THE MATTER NEEDED MORE STUDY. IN THE FACE OF DISAGREEMENT THE SESSION BROKE INTO THE SEPARATE CAUCUS GROUPS. WITHIN THE "OTHER MILDS" GUATEMALA'S RENE MONTES

COBAR (DESCRIBED AS CONSTANTLY ATTACKING FALLA CACERES IN A JOSTLE FOR GROUP LEADERSHIP) KEPT GUATEMALA IN A MINORITY UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE WHEN ALL AGREED TO SUPPORT THE AFRICANS. WHEN THIS WAS ANNOUNCED COLOMBIA WAS "STUNNED" INTO A 45 MINUTE SILENCE. ONE INTERPRETATION OF THE COLOMBIAN AND BRAZILIAN POSITION WAS THAT THEIR UNDER THE TABLE SALES WOULD BE EASILY DETECTED UNDER A GENERAL SALES EMBARGO. A GULF REPORTEDLY WIDENED BETWEEN THESE TWO PRODUCERS, WITH BRAZIL LEANING TOWARD THE AFRICANS AND "OTHER MILDS".

5. IN A SIGNIFICANT SWITCH DURING THE SALVADORAN CAUCUS BEFORE THE MEETING, ABECAFE (MILLERS AND EXPORTERS) ARGUED FOR CLOSING THE EXPORT REGISTRY WHILE CSC AND DNC MANAGER FALLA CACERES FOUND HIMSELF IN THE UNUSUAL POSITION OF OPPOSING THE IDEA FOR REASONS OF REALITY, I.E. THAT EL SALVADOR COULD NOT OBTAIN TOTAL PRODUCER SUPPORT FOR THE ACTION. DURING THE SESSION CRITICISM WAS LEVIED AGAINST GUATEMALA AND TO A LESSER DEGREE EL SALVADOR, EACH FOR HAVING SOLD SOME ONE MILLION BAGS THUS FAR IN THE 1974/75 COFFEE YEAR. EL SALVADOR WAS ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF, EXPLAINING THAT ITS HEAVY FIRST QUARTER (COFFEE YEAR) SALES WERE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY UNSOLD AVAILABILITIES FROM THE PRIOR YEAR AND THAT FOR THAT REASON IT ADOPTED THE INTERNAL EXPORT QUOTA OF 15 PERCENT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER AND 25 FOR THE SECOND (THEREAFTER 20 PERCENT EACH QUARTER AS THE OTHER PRODUCERS WERE APPLYING FOR ALL FOUR QUARTERS). GUATEMALA, SO THE REPORT GOES, DID NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAVE THE 1973/74 OVERHANG AND WAS CALLED DOWN FOR EXCESSIVE SALES OF 1974/75 COFFEE THIS YEAR. IT IS REPORTED THAT GUATEMALA EXCLUDED ITSELF FROM THE VENEZUELAN COFFEE FINANCING FOR THE REASON THAT IT HAS NO RETENTION TO FINANCE. MEXICO ALSO WAS ACCUSED FOR HAVING ALREADY SOLD A MILLION BAGS THIS COFFEE YEAR. TINOCO SAID THE UNUSUALLY FRANK DIVULGENCE OF COFFEE SITUATION INFORMATION AND EXCHANGE OF

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 IO-10 AGR-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15

STR-01 TAR-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

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P 202135Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7459

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AEOASSY TEGUCIGALPA 3407

AMEMBAJSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGUI

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VIEWS GAVE THE MEETING A VALUE WHICH COULD NOT BE
TRANSLATED INTO THE USUAL CRITERIO OF VALUATION, I.E.
RESOLUTIONS. (A MORE FRANK VIEW, FROM A PARTICIPANT, WAS
THAT THE "NAME CALLING" CONTENT OF THE EXCHANGE AT LEAST
EQUALLED ANY CONSTRUCTIVE DISCOURSE AND MOST DELEGATES
LEFT WITH A BAD TASTE IN THEIR MOUTHS.) BRAZIL SAID ITS

EXPORTS WOULD TOTAL 14 MILLION BAGS AND IT WOULD SEEK TO PRORATE SALES AT 1.2 MILLION A MONTH. COLOMBIA ADMITTED TO HAVING A "BAD CROP" AND WOULD EXPORT LESS THAN LAST YEAR. WHEN ASKED CONCERNING THE POSITION OF NICARAGUA, TINOCO SAID IT USUALLY WHAFFLES DURING A MEETING, AT ONE MOMENT APPEARING OUTSIDE OR ON THE FENCE AND THE OTHER IN THE FOLD. BUT AT MEETING'S END NICARAGUA SAID IT WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE RETNETION SCHEME AND IN "OTRAS SUAVES, S.A.". LIKEWISE, OWING TO THE VENEZUELAN FINANCING, HONDURAS OPTED BACK INTO THA RETENTION SCHEME.

6. LOCAL PRESS REACTION WAS NO DOUBT STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY PIQUE OVER TOTAL PRESS EXCLUSION FROM THE VSESSIONS. (ISSUE BECAME SO HEATED LOCAL PRESS BEAT UP CSC PRESSMAN WHO WAS HOSPITALIZED.) NONETHELESS THE PRESS ACCOUNTS REFLECT A RATHER GOOD JOB OF DIGGING THE CONFERENCE CORRIDORS. CONFRONTATION AND EMBARRASSMENT TO THE SALVADORAN HOSTS RESULTED FROM FEB 17 AM ISSUE OF "DIARIO DE HOY" HEADLINES "COFFEE MEETING FAILS." GOES ECONMIN HIDALGO QUEHL AND SALVADORAN COFFEE ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT FERRIERO VISITED THE PAPER AND ARGUED THAT ITS POSITION WOULD CAUSE COFFEE PRICES DECLINES -- A TRUE PREDICTION. ALTHOUGH THE PAPER'S NEXT EDITION HEADLINED "HIDALGO QUEHL AND FERRIERO: COFFEE MEETING SUCCESSFUL", THE NY QUOTES FELL AND THE FEBRUARY 19 EDITION OF DIARIO LATINO ENDED THE PRESS CAPER WITH ITS HEADLINE "COFFEE CROPS UNDER WEIGHT OF SUCCESSFUL MEETING".

7. TINOCO (ADMITTING BEING INFLUENCED BY A DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL WHO WARNED HIM OF THE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE EFFECT OF STRONG PRODUCER STATEMENTS) TOLD ECONOFF HE URGED DELEGATES TO BRIDLE THEIR TONGUES OUTSIDE THE SESSION. THUS THE FOLLOWING SELECTION OF QUOTES PERHAPS LACKS THE NORMAL SPICE:
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A) MEXICO'S CANTU PENA: QUOTE WE NEED SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FOR THAT WE FIGHT FOR INCOOE. ALL THE ICA HAS AS AN OBJECTIVE IS PRICE -- AND TO SPEAK OF AGREEMENTS WITHOUT OBJECTIVES OF PRICE IS TO NEGOTIATE WITHOUT NEGOTIATING...WE'RE AT THE POINT OF NO RETURN...IN THE MEETING WE'RE LOOKING FOR AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENTS TO PRICES...OUR POSQ-TION IS DEFENSIVE, IN NO WAY AGGRESSIVE...PRICES ARE SO LOW THAT TO SELL IS TO SUBSIDIZE THE IMPORTERS. END QUOTE. ON THE OCCASION OF DELIVERING THE PRESS COMMUNIQUE, CANTU SAID THAT BY MARCH 31 THERE SHOULD BE DEPOSITED IN WAREHOUSES 17.5 MILLION BAGS, MADE UP OF 20 PERCENT OF THE 19(4/75 PRODUCTION AND 10 PERCENT OF THE 1973/74. HE WAS ASKED THE TARGET PRICE AND SAID ONLY BEGIN QUOTE THEY SOUGHT A JUST AND REMUNERATIVE PRICE, (ADDING) TO NOT REVEAL THE PRICE OBJECTIVE IS PART OF THE STRATEGY. END QUOTE.

B) PORTUGAL'S ROCHA DE MEDINA, ON FEB 19 CONCERNING THE FALL IN COFFEE PRICES SAID, BEGIN QUTTE THE STORY IN PRICES WOULD BE TOLD AFTER MARCH 31." IN REPLY TO A QUESTION CONCERNING THE US TRADE ACT, HE SAID, "IT IS NOT CONTRARY TO HISPANO-AMERICAN INTERESTS" AND NOTED THAT COFFEE IS NOT BASIC TO THE US ECONOMY AND, FORUNATELY, COFFEE IS A PLEASURE DRINK IN THE US AND IS NOTHING VITAL TO THAT PEOPLE."

8. VENEZUELA'S PRESENCE WAS DESCRIBED AS FOR FINANCIAL REASONS, IN CONNECTION WITH ITS CREDIT LINE FOR "OTHER MILDS" RETENTION FINANCING AND ALSO ITS SUPPORT FOR "OTRAS SUAVES S.A.", WHICH IS TO LOCATE IN CARACAS. TINOCO TOLD ECONOFF THAT OWING TO DIFFERING DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM AMONG THE POTENTIAL 1-COUNTRIES FOR THE COMPANY THERE IS THOUGHT TO ESTABLISHING THREE CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP (A,B, AND C). "A" MEMBERS WOULD SUBSCRIBE THE HIGHEST \$3 MILLION AMOUNT AND THE OTHER TWO CATEGORIES LESSER AMOUNTS. PRESS ACCOUNTS DURING THE MEETING SPOKE OF EARLY CONCLUSION OF ARRANGEMENTS ESTABLISHING "OTRAS SUAVES S.A.".

9. ONE GOES PARTICIPANT TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE BAD EXPERIENCE BY BRAZIL, COLOMBIA, EL SALVADOR AND MEXICO IN COFFEE PURCHASES MACHINATIONS LAST YEAR FOR PRICE SUPPORT HUNG AS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BLACK CLOUD OVER THESE DELEGATIONS DURING THE MEETING. SOURCE SAID 1.3 MILLION BAGS OF THE COFFEE BOUGHT BY THIS GROUP REMAINS IN OFFSHORE DEPOTS SUCH AS HAMBURG AND THAT LOSSES SUSTAINED AT TODAY'S PRICES ARE ROUGHLY, \$40 MILLION EACH FOR BRAZIL AND COLOMBIA, \$30 MILLION FOR EL SALVADOR AND 20 MILLION FOR MEXICO. THIS IS NOT VERIFIABLE BY US BUT ROUGHLY CONFORMS WITH BITS OF INFORMATION FROM MANY SOURCES. ON THE OCCASION OF THE RECENT ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CSC, THE ANNUAL REPORT WAS APPROVED AFTER MUCH DEBATE AND WITH A LOSS ENTRY OF ONLY \$4 MILLION. COMMENT THEREAFTER WAS THAT STOCKHOLDERS WERE FULLY AWARE OF MUCH GREATER LOSSES. EMBASSY'S CAPITAL ACCOUNT REPORTING (SAN SALVADOR 0165) REFERRED TO A CONVERSION FROM SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM EXTERNAL DEBT BY THE CENTRAL RESERVE BANK OF \$50 MILLION COFFEE AND COTTON FINANCING, SO THE AMOUNT COULD BE CORRECT.

10. COMMENT: THE MEETING APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A DISASTER WHEN CONSIDERED FROM THE TOTAL PRODUCER VIEWPOINT. AS DAYS PASS THE STORY OF DEEP DIVISION WILL EMERGEN AND DO THE GROUP'S MUCH-SOUGHT-AFTER "UNITY" IMAGE MUCH DAMAGE. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE MEETING ESTAWLISHED ONCE AGAIN THE DISTANCE COFFEE PRODUCERS MUST YET TRAVEL TO EMERGE AS A POTENT CARTEL. FROM THE SALVADORAN POINT OF VIEW THE

MEETING HAD VALUE FOR REASONS OF THE PRESTIGE IT AFFORDED
AND THE EDUCATION IT PROVIDED THE SOME 60 SALVADORAN COFFEE
INDUSTRY OBSERVERS CONCERNING COFFEE WORLD POLITICS. FINOCO
PRIVATELY OPINED THAT HE WOULD HAVE FOUND NO JOY IN ATTENDING
AN OFFSHORE MEETING GIVEN THE HOSTILE AND DISTRUSTFUL
SALVADORAN DOMESTIC ATTITUDES. "IT WAS MUCH PREFERABLE TO
BRING THE COFFEE RABBLE TO SAN SALVADOR.
CAMPBELL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COFFEE, POLICIES, AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, PRODUCTION DATA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANSAA00703
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750061-0724
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750227/aaaaayct.tel
Line Count: 393
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SAN SALVADOR 0437
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <02 JUN 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WORLD COFFEE PRODUCERS MEETING, SAN SALVADOR, FEBRUARY 14-16
TAGS: OCON, ETRD, ES, (MOLINA BARRAZA, ARTURO ARMANDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006